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AUTHOR Ekanayake, S. B.
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ABSTRACT

Representatives from 15 villages participated in a workshop planned to give teachers in rural small schools an understanding of the nature and problems of the small school and its community, an appreciation of the cultural background of village people, and the skills to implement practical village development programs. Prior to the workshop, Hingurakgoda Training College conducted a survey to determine educational needs in the Polonnaruwa District. In response to the survey, which revealed problems in the areas of teacher training, administration, and curriculum, the workshop was designed to develop qualities and skills needed by teachers in the small school. Thirty teachers, principals, and villagers met for 4 days in the village of Dalukana and shared an equal role in preparing for and conducting a fact finding mission to determine village resources, cultural factors, health and nutritional problems, and educational needs. Based on the information gathered, a program was planned of small scale projects having immediate and tangible results, e.g., clearing a plot for a school garden, preparing a volley ball court for village use, stocking and distributing first aid kits. At a second session three weeks later, participants discussed successful completion for projects in the areas of agriculture, health, sports and culture, and education. (JH)

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NATIONAL ADVANCED LEVEL

WORKSHOP ON CONTINUING EDUCATION

FOR TEACHER EDUCATORS

COLOMBO = SRI LANKA

SRILANKA FOUNDATION INSTITUTE/ UNESCO.

26th February 1979 - 9th March 1979.

A Project on Teacher Training for the Development of the Small School In S R I L A N K A

S.B.Ekanayake

PRINCIPAL TEACHERS' COLLEGE

HINGURAKGODA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

COLOMBO

SRI LANKA.

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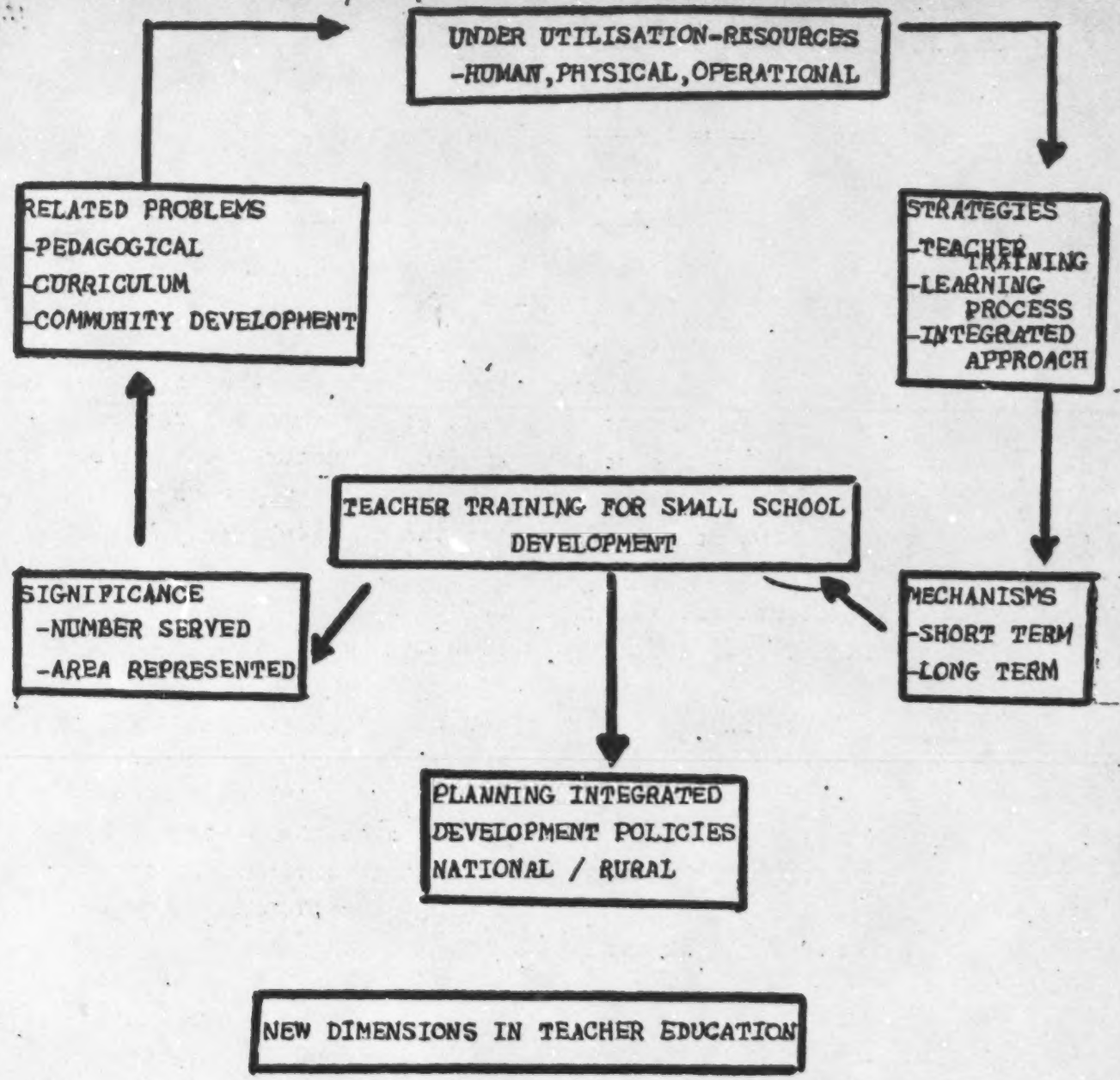
A PROJECT ON TEACHER TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL SCHOOLS IN SRI LANKA ORGANISED BY THE TEACHERS: COLLEGE HINGURAKGODA SRI LANKA

1.000 Rationale of the project

In all developing countries which won their independance in the last few decades, the pattern of education has been made subservient to the needs of the colonial masters. As a result, the content and the structure of the education system did not mirror the aspiratious and needs of the community, it failed to meet the challenges of the society. "To many of them the school (was) offering nothing besides inhibition and restriction." So that the education provided did not fall in to the milieu of the masses.

A large number of receipients of this education were left at the village level to make a living out of their traditional skills which they had picked up through informal learning. Formal learning, for which the State had spent so much, has had no impact on their living.This is directly a result of allenating education from the felt needs of the community.

This focuses our attention on the need for community involvement in education and vice versa. "Education is in fact nothing other than the whole life of the community viewed from a particular stand point of view to live that life".[2] 2 The building up of a society fostering indegenious cultural values is baiscally necessary for the development of that society and in this connection education has a major


UNDER UTILISATION-RESOURCES
-HUMAN, PHYSICAL, OPERATIONAL
RELATED PROBLEMS
-PEDAGOGICAL
-CURRICULUM
-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIES
-TEACHER TRAINING
-LEARNING PROCESS
-INTEGRATED APPROACH
TEACHER TRAINING FOR SMALL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT
SIGNIFICANCE
-NUMBER SERVED
-AREA REPRESENTED
MECHANISMS
-SHORT TERM
-LONG TERM
PLANNING INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT POLICIES NATIONAL / RURAL
NEW DIMENSIONS IN TEACHER EDUCATION

role to play. "Schools must become communities and communities which practice the concept of self reliance. The teachers, workers, and pupils together must be members of a social unit in the same way as parents, relations and children are the family social unit". [3] What all these suggest is that if education is to be of use it should have relevance to that society. Only then positive socio economic changes could take place in a country. Significence of this fact is very great in developing countries because up to recent times the tendency has been to implant the models of the developed world, without paying any heed to the cultural contradictions of such models, Experience has now shown that this process has ultimately led to problems instead of solving them.

For this a different strategy in educational planning is required altogether. A change in the school curriculum should be followed by a change in the teacher training programme because all changes that take place in the field of education have to be translated in to action by the teacher at the class room level. He has to be oriented to this task before anyone else. Thus a change in the role and functions of the teacher has to be made if any over all success is to be achieved in any programme of this nature.

The teacher should be able to function in different capacities at the village level. Being the only educated person at the village level, his services are solicited by the community. This requires of him to understand the aspirations and needs of the community. All these ultimately will lead

him to get a deep understanding of the resources and also how to use them for the enrichment of both the rural school and the community. For all these the teacher requires a practical training. Then only he would be capable to undertake additional responsibilities vis a vis the community. It would give him the necessary confidence to assume the different roles expected of him by the community. Further it could give him the necessary skills to develop teaching methods and techniques appropriate to a small school.

2.00 Small School - Its nature and significance

The small school is one which can be more easily described than defined. It serves a small number, in a limited area. The size and nature of the buildings,the number of teachers on the staff, the number of students on roll, day-to-day activities and general functions of the school are some of the other features that assist in identifying a small school. How ever, for ease of computing, a school that has a population of less than a hundred students on roll and two teachers on the staff could fall into the category of the small school.

~~The impact of a small school on the total education of the country is relatively negligible. It attracts little attention from the elitist society. Mass media does not usually~~

Out of a total number of 9980 schools in Sri Lanka there were about 2642 small schools in 1975. This is about 28.6% of the total number. The percentage would be more if the average attendance is taken into consideration, instead of the total number on roll.

Of this a large number are found in the less developed areas of the country. Over 50% of the schools in the following regions belong to the small schools category. Anuradhapura - 256-51.6% Mannar- 57 54.9% Vavuniya - 120 - 60.1%. Fifteen other Educational Regions have percentages over 25. As it is in every district there is a fair number that fall into this category. Colombo North has the least with 13 and a percentage of 5 only.[4]

The distribution indicates that it does not exclude the urban sector although the weightage is on the rural areas. Besides, the distribution of the small school indicates very clearly that it serves a large area and a large number of a people in the country. More important is the fact that is recipients are the most underprivileged and require most help. The importance of the small school in educational scene of Sri Lanka is therefore, considerable.

The impact of the small school on the total education of the Sri Lanka country is relatively negligible. It attracts little attention from the elitist society. Mass media does not usually highlight its problems and modest achievements.

Nevertheless the small school has made a positive contribution towards the education of the rural areas over the last few decades. It has helped to improve the literacy rate in our country, today one of the highest in Asia. On rare occasions it has helped the gifted and the more fortunate ones to enter the main stream of education and reap its full benefits.

Problems

Problems

All these makes it fairly clear that the problems and possible strategies that could be adopted in the development of the small school in Sri Lanka should vary from place to place.In this effort obviously there cannot be straight-jacket solutions.

A far sighted orientation of teacher training programmes is important here.Demands of the teacher of the small school would be great and not all teachers would be capable po of shouldering this additional responsibility.The teacher should be oriented to these additional tasks during his training period.His mission, resposibilities and commitments should be inculcated into him through a practical training programme.Such training programmes have been organised under the auspicious of the UNECSCO in six African countries.They are the Cameroona, Ethiopia,Ivory Coast, Liberia,Nigeria and Tongo.The essential purpose is not tot train classroom specialists only but to produce rural educators,well adapted to local conditions and needs and are skilled it at initiating and organising a wide variety of community development actvities.

An equally important task is the developing of a special curriculum and pedagogical techniques.Such an approach would help to develope a system of learning that would be relevant and elicit the creativity of the people at rural level.In addition to the vast extent of area that belong to theseareas, 2/3 of the population live in the rural sector.Of the younger generation approximately 40% are from the rural areas.

These figures clearly indicates the importance of the rural ares in our country. Implementation of relevant learning programmes should form part of the long term policy in developing rural areas.Hence the need to look for new approaches and techniques in the small schools of Sri Lanka. The problems of the small school are thus deep rooted and more or less built into the system of education.They are connected to the socio economy of the community and therefore solutions must come with the development of the community.An education system that recognises the resources and needs of the people should be evolved.Only then it could make an effective impact on the rural areas of the country.

3.00 Preparatory Action for the Innovation

A basic survey of 6 village small schools in the Polonnaruwa District where the Hingurakgoda Training College is situated, was conducted by the Teachers trainees under the supervision of the Teacher Educator ~~TT-programmes. (b)~~ ¥ The highlights of this survey were (a) the inadequacy of the TT programmes. (b) problems arising out of administration and (c) curriculum and its irrelevance.

A. Teacher Training.

1. Inability of the Teachers to comprehend the nature of the socio economic and cultural structure of the village.
2. Lack of understanding of the 'psychological structures' of the villager.
3. The problem of translating in to action and reality the theoretical educational knowledge and sophisticated teaching techniques.

4. Teacher school rapport with the villagers not healthy.
5. Lack of understanding and orientation towards the problems of the villager by the teacher.
6. Inability to use resources of the village for teaching and development.

B. Administrative

1. Applying the same rules and regulations meant for the affluent and well to do school for the rural school as well, to ~~do-school-as-well~~.
   a. admission age limit
   b. readmission and reentry difficulty
   c. five and half hour time table
   d. school holidays
   e. re opening and closure time
   f. difficulty to use resourcse persons
   g. punishment transfers
   h. teacher student quota basis
2. Lack of incentives/rewards for the teacher working in the rural school.
3. Poverty of the parents not taken into consideration in providing facilities

C. Curriculum

1. Use of the same curriculum meant for all schools with facilities
2. The need for resource aspect ignored
3. Use of the same teaching techniques as in the developed school
4. Inability to relate learning to life activities at the village level
5. Lack of confidence for innovative techniques

All these factors revealed that there was indeed an urgent need to evaolve a different approach to develope the small school in Sri Lanka. However it was not possible to take remedial measurexs to solve all the problems revealed by the survey.Some factors were not only beyond the capacity of the teachers' college but was also time consuming as for example matters connected with a.Administration b.Curriculum.

Nevertheless it was found possible to make an effort to develope certain qualities and skills in the teacher relevant and needed for the small school.Therefore,the teachers' college,Hingurakgoda with the help of the Teachers'College Branch of The Ministry of Education developed an action oriented plan to train the teachers already attached to the small school.~~It would be very pertinent here to find out the role of the small school and its salient features vis a vis the education system and the community~~.

4.00. Objectives

With the above in mind a programme of action was drawn up to train the teachers' for the small school. For this purpose the following objectives were formulated.

1. To deepen the teachers' understanding of the following:
   (a) the development problems faced by the rural people
   (b) relevance of one's education to rural development
   (c) interdisciplinary thinking and cross sectional approach to problems.
2. To deepen the skills of the teacher, enabling him to design and participate in village development programmes in a practical way.
3. To give the teacher an understanding of the nature and problems of the small school and its community.

4. Totrain the teacher in the use of resources of the small school and its community.
5. To develop teaching methodologies suitable for the small school.

5.00 Implementation

The location of the first worksite was Dalukana, a lonely but a lively village, situated about 30 miles north east of the Teachers' College Hingurakgoda.

It is a small school in every sense of the word- buildings, staff and children. To this school 15 Principals and Teachers of the small schools in the district, where the T.C. is situated were invited. This number constitutes about 40%of the small schools in this district. In addition a representative from each of the villages was also invited. The whole groupformed 30.

It was a four day programme including the week end. This was to avoid disruption of the work in the small schools as far as possible. The problem of the number on staff did not permit us to invite more than one from each of the schools.

The phases of the first training programme

1. Getting to know the villagers 1st day (evening)
   (a) the venue was the school hall
   (b) It was relaxed and there was no central direction
   (c) free discussion/small groups/informal
   (d) participants included very old men, women,youth and children.
   (e) topics that came for discussion reflected the needs resources and problems of the village.

This helped the participants to get a feeling of the socio economic structure of the village. It also assisted them in the following days fact finding work at the village.

2. Preparation for the Fact Finding Mission

(a) areas under which the survey was to be conducted based on the discussion the villagers had with the participants resources of the villagers /cultural pattern/ healths and nutrition/mass media/educational problems.

(b) All findings were to be oriented to development of the individual and the total community.

3. Fact Finding Mission and Field Work

(a) the time to visit the houses was fixed for the afternoon.

(b) visited only selected houses due to lack of time

(c) observation and discussion were the two important techniques used.

(d) presentation of data findings through pictorial and graphic forms.

4. Observations on the fact finding mission

(a) The villagers were ready for the visit

(b) the confident nature of the participants in their relations with the villagers/respect for poverty and skills.

(c) the ability of the participants to know what to look for and to ignore others

(d) limited time factor.

6.00 Outcomes Based on the above facts, a small scale positive programme of action was drawn up. This had two aspects. All activities were small scale ones where

Immediate results could be seen by everyone.The time factor permitted us only to give the start in some of the activities.The rest of the programme was either undertaken by the school or the rural development society or some other department or a voluntary association that joined in this programme.One of the main objectives was to imbibe in the teacher the idea of using various agents and sources for the community education.

The participants were made aware that community development programmes would vary from place to place depending on the resources and needs of the community.In this workshop a few activities were organised as a practical study so that the experience would be useful when they get back to their school and village.

Activities

School based - 1. sports gymnasium consisting of the following to begin with-swing,balancing post, jumping pit, rope climbing, high jump post.
2. agricultural plot for the school - 100x100'
3. Sports club
4. health programme

Village based -
1. clearing a tank bund-this tank has not been used by the villagers due to a breach
2. sewing classes for out of school youth
3. preparing a volley ball court
4. cultural programme - where all villagers and teachers participated

Proposed activities

1. net ball court-the ball was provided
2. fence for the plot was to be constructed by the villagers
3. first aid box to be turned out
4. drawing up of curriculm based on needs and resources

7.00 Use of resources for teaching / learning

Apart from these the teachers were also guided as how to use the enviornmental and human resources for teaching learning situations-use of the well, worksite, playground, cultural activities. These were to be learning centres. However no attempt was made to change the existing curriculum though it was the ultimate objective. Different teaching techniques and methods more relevent to life and reality were to be followed. So that learning becomes and interesting and worthwhile activity rather than a mere academic exercise

For example in the activities mentioned above the children were given the measurements of the posts height and girth to cut them from the nearby jungle. They also had to measure the ~~l~~enth-and length and breath of the volley ball court and buy the needed rope to demarcate the area. The office bearers of the sports club had to draw up programmes, write minutes of the meetings. They were related to learning situations.

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8.00 Integration

A number of other departments and voluntary associations joined in this programme. The participants were able to understand various aspects of getting aid, advice and assistance from them. Health Rural Development, Agriculture and Sarvodaya were represented at this workshop.

9.001 Inputs Inputs were in the form of labour, equipment stationery and clothing. These were supplied by various departments institutions. The villagers supplied labour and assisted the participants in all activities . Timber needed for the preparation of the sports activities came from the village forest. The much needed utensils in the form of axes knives and mammotees were given by the villagers. The balls and nets were provided by the education departments and SarvodayaMovement. Help also came in the form of stationry and clothing from richer schools. The health department also presented the children with nutritive food items.

10.00 Evaluation The teachers and village representatives were brought to the TC Hingurakgoda after a period of three weeks for a three day seminar with the following objectives.

1. To review and analyse the experience of the projects undertaken by the groups and identify the weaknesses and strengths and proposed solutions for improvement.

2. To develop guidlines to integrate all forms of learning for rural reconstruction.

3. To identify possible problems that arise in the working with other departments and propose strategies to overcome these problems.

This workshop was held towards the end of October 1978 at the TC Hingurakgoda . The participants were the same as for the previous one.

The first day was entirely devoted for the submission of reports of the projects undertaken by the respective schools. Representatives of health agriculture and public administration were present in addition to the representatives of the Sarvodaya Movement, Sri Lanka.

11.00 <u>General characteristics of the projects undertaken by them</u>

1. Most of the projects were ones where results could be seen/achieved immediately or in the near future.

2. All projects were small scale ones which did not require much capital.

3. All projects for economic development were agriculture based

4. Most of the programmes had to face obstacles.

5. All obstacles had been generally removed peacefully both to the satisfaction of the innovator and the village

6. Improvements in the relationship with other departments

Examples of Projects

Agriculture based

1. vegetable plot for the school, the yelld of which to be shared by the children themselves
2. ~~making first~~ clearing of a chena with the assistance of the villagers for highland paddy
3. preparing land for cultivation of cotton, land for this purpose was obtained from the villagers on a lease basis
4. clearing of canals for irrigation

2. Health based

1. organising regular clinics with the assistance of hthe Physical Health Inspector (PHI)
2. making first aid boxes for the school and for the village
3. cleaning up of a bathing place for the village in the village tank
4. Construction of lavatories on the advice of the PHI

3. Culture Sports based

1. organising a playground with the help of villagers and the police department
2. Organising a sports meet for the villagers
3. Organising inter small school sports meet

5. Education

1. most of these were to be related to teaching - learning situations drama, agricultureal

programmes, health etc.

12.00 Innovative features

1. Use of village representatives for workshop along with the Principals and the teachers of the school. This was the first time in Sri Lanka that villagers were treated as co equals in a workshop.
2. The village as the training centre of the workshop. This had a very great impact on the whole programme for it was possible to provide practical and life situations for the teacher.
3. The dis regard for the usual approaches adopted by educators in formulating programmes of development for the village - the office centred approach where there is central direction from the local office.
4. The method of getting the teachers and others to sit along with the villagers and discuss their problems, without preconceived notions of their education or professional competency.